

What is claimed is:

5 a shipper specifying shipping requirements that comprise
information that describes a requested shipping service and a commodity to
be shipped; and

2. The method of claim 1, wherein one or more auctions have been initiated, the method further comprising:

3. The method of claim 2, further comprising the service provider selecting one of the one or more auctions in order to place a bid on the selected auction.

25 5. The method of claim 2, further comprising filtering the one or more auctions according to criteria specified by the service provider, wherein the specified criteria correspond to certain shipping requirements.

17. The method of claim 16, wherein the managing the live auction comprises inviting a bid from a service provider.

18. The method of claim 16, wherein the live auction has an expiration time and the managing the live auction comprises extending the live auction past the expiration time.

19. The method of claim 15, wherein the live auction closes due to the lack of an acceptance of a bid, the method further comprises managing the closed auction.

20. The method of claim 1, wherein the specifying includes specifying within the shipping requirements an indication of a shipping route.

21. The method of claim 1, wherein the specifying includes specifying one of the following for the shipping service: a LCL one-time shipment, a FCL one-time shipment or a service contract.

22. The method of claim 1, wherein the specifying includes specifying within the shipping requirements an indication of a number of containers required.

23. The method of claim 1, wherein the specifying includes indicating a corresponding HTSUS code for the commodity.

24. The method of claim 1, wherein the specifying includes indicating within the shipping requirements whether the commodity is hazardous.

25. The method of claim 1, wherein the specifying includes indicating within the shipping requirements a penalty per container.

26. The method of claim 1, wherein the specifying includes indicating within the shipping requirements a size of container.

27. The method of claim 1, further comprising the shipper indicating a range of acceptable bids.

28. The method of claim 4, further comprising indicating shipping terms within the price components.

29. The method of claim 1, wherein a plurality of bids comprising a price, price components and a service provider identity are placed on the auction, the method further comprising displaying the plurality of bids so that the shipper can view the plurality of bids.

30. The method of claim 1, wherein a plurality of bids, each bid comprising a price, price components and a service provider identity, are placed on the auction by a plurality of service providers, the method further comprising displaying the plurality of bids so that a service provider can only view the price and price components of the bids of other service providers.

31. The method of claim 1, wherein a bid has been placed on the auction by a service provider and has been accepted by the shipper, the method further comprising the shipper providing feedback on the service provider, the feedback comprising a rating of the service provider.

32. The method of claim 1, wherein the shipper is any one of the following: an importer, exporter, shipping association or a NVOCC.

33. The method of claim 2, wherein the service provider is any one of the following: an ocean carrier, a ocean carrier's agent, a freight forwarder or a NVOCC.

34. An online shipping exchange comprising:
a server that hosts the online shipping exchange, comprising:
a secondary storage device; and

38. The online shipping exchange of claim 31, wherein the shipping services comprise a LCL shipment, a FCL shipment or a services contract.

39. A method operative at a server for creating a business to business exchange for shipments, the method comprising:

displaying a list of live auctions for shipping services that are available for bidding;

identifying a commodity being shipped for each of the live auctions;

storing a bid placed on one of the live auctions, wherein the bid includes price components; and

displaying the bid so that a first user may evaluate the bid.

40. The method of claim 36 further comprising notifying a second user that an auction that meets criteria specified by the second user is available for bidding.

41. The method of claim 40, wherein the notifying comprises sending an email message to the second user.

42. The method of claim 36 further comprising notifying the first user that a bid has been placed on an auction submitted by the first user.

43. The method of claim 42, wherein the notifying comprises sending an email message to the first user.

44. The method of claim 39, wherein the first user is a shipper.

45. The method of claim 44, wherein the shipper is a NVOCC.

46. The method of claim 40, wherein the second user is a service provider.

47. The method of claim 46, wherein the service provider is a NVOCC.